

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1- 211. (Cancelled)

212. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method of operating a service to generate a result for an electronic mail ("e-mail") message, comprising:

by the service, receiving a request comprising meta-data information regarding the e-mail message, **the meta-data information regarding the e-mail message includes at least an e-mail address of a sender of the e-mail message and an e-mail address of a receiver of the e-mail message,**

by the service, processing at least a portion of the request to determine the result using a service private key, the service private key kept secret by the service; and

by the service, providing the result for incorporation of the result into the e-mail message prior to the e-mail message being transmitted to a recipient of the e-mail message, as a result-incorporated e-mail message, via an e-mail system.

213. (Cancelled)

214. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 212, wherein:

the request further includes a digest of a body of the e-mail message.

215. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 214, wherein:

the digest of the body of the e-mail message has been generated using an SHA algorithm.

216. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 212, wherein:

the request does not include the body of the e-mail message or information from which the body of the e-mail message can be derived.

217. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 212, wherein:
the service determines the result to further include an indication of a level of certification of the e-mail message.
218. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 212, wherein:
the request further comprises sender verification information; and
the method further comprises, by the service, processing the sender verification information.
219. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 212, wherein:
a sender is associated with e-mail message; and
the method further comprises, by the service, determining how the sender may be later located.
220. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 219, wherein:
determining how the sender may be later located includes associating a degree of certainty with the determination.
221. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 220, wherein:
the result includes an indication of the degree of certainty.
222. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 221, wherein:
a sender of the e-mail message is associated with a particular e-mail address of a plurality of e-mail addresses; and
the method further comprises:
at the service, before providing the result for incorporation of the result into the e-mail message, sending an inquiry e-mail message to the particular e-mail address; and
at the service, observing behavior of the sender associated with the inquiry e-mail message.
223. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 222, wherein:
the behavior of the sender associated with the inquiry e-mail message includes the sender sending an e-mail message to the service in reply to the inquiry e-mail message.

224. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 222, wherein:

the behavior of the sender associated with the inquiry e-mail message includes following instructions set forth in the inquiry e-mail message.

225. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 224, wherein:

the instructions include instruction to link to a particular universal resource locator.

226. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 222, further comprising:

by the service, before providing the result for incorporation into the e-mail message, receiving a request for the sender to subscribe to the service;

by the service, sending an inquiry message to a sender associated with the sender's side, by a transmission channel other than the electronic mail system; and

by the service, observing behavior associated with the inquiry message.

227. (Currently Amended) A method for a recipient of an electronic mail ("e-mail") message to validate a sender of the e-mail message, comprising:

receiving the e-mail message;

processing a header field of the received e-mail message using a public key of a service to generate a first result;

processing a portion of the received e-mail message to generate a second result, the portion of the e-mail message including at least metadata information regarding the received e-mail message but not including the header field of message processed to generate the first result, **the meta-data information regarding the e-mail message includes at least an e-mail address of a sender of the e-mail message and an e-mail address of a receiver of the e-mail message**; and

comparing the first result to the second result to assess the integrity of the received e-mail message.

228. (Cancelled)

229. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 227, wherein:

the portion of the e-mail message processed to generate the second result includes a body of the received e-mail message.

230. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 227, wherein:
the second result is a digest of a body of the received e-mail message.
231. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 227, wherein:
the step of processing the received result-incorporated e-mail message to assess the integrity of the e-mail message includes:
deriving the portion of the request from which the result was determined;
processing the portion of the request and the received e-mail message to assess the integrity of the e-mail message.
232. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 231, wherein:
deriving the portion of the request from which the result was determined includes processing the result using the service public key to generate a decrypted result;
processing the portion of the request and the received e-mail message to assess the integrity of the e-mail message includes
generating a digest of the message body and processing the generated digest and the decrypted result to assess the integrity of the e-mail message.
233. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 227, wherein:
the step of processing the received result-incorporated e-mail message to assess the integrity of the e-mail message includes processing the result to determine a level of certification of the e-mail message.
234. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 227, wherein:
processing the received result-incorporated e-mail message to assess the integrity of the e-mail message is without interacting with a service that created the result, prior to the result having been incorporated into the e-mail message.
235. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 227, further comprising:
sending a request to obtain contact information about the sender from a service that created the result, prior to the result having been incorporated into the e-mail message; and
receiving the requested contact information about the sender.

236. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 235, wherein:
the requested contact information about the sender is in a format appropriate to an e-mail client program used by the recipient.

237. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 235, wherein:
the requested contact information includes at least one link to sender advertising.

238. (Currently Amended) A computing system configured to be usable by a recipient of an electronic mail ("e-mail") message to validate a sender of the e-mail message, the computing system configured to:

receive the e-mail message;

process a header field of the received e-mail message using a public key of a service to generate a first result;

process a portion of the received e-mail message to generate a second result, the portion of the e-mail message including at least metadata information regarding the received e-mail message but not including the header field of message processed to generate the first result, **the meta-data information regarding the received e-mail message includes at least an e-mail address of a sender of the e-mail message and an e-mail address of a receiver of the e-mail message;** and

compare the first result to the second result to assess the integrity of the received e-mail message.

239. (New) A computing system configured to operate a service to generate a result for an electronic mail ("e-mail") message, the computing system configured to:

receive a request comprising meta-data information regarding the e-mail message, the meta-data information regarding the e-mail message includes at least an e-mail address of a sender of the e-mail message and an e-mail address of a receiver of the e-mail message,

process at least a portion of the request to determine the result using a service private key, the service private key kept secret by the service; and

provide the result for incorporation of the result into the e-mail message prior to the e-mail message being transmitted to a recipient of the e-mail message, as a result-incorporated e-mail message, via an e-mail system.